

APPENDIX: Case Review from Birchall Consulting and Associates, Inc.

The initial intent for this case review, completed in 2017, was to see how consistent a random sample of my client cases over the past 10 years are in comparison to existing hoarding research. At the same time, Suzanne and I examined any links we could find between Birchall Consulting hoarding cases and their demographics. We do not offer this information as a scientific study. It is simply a snapshot of demographics for 214 cases.* We looked at the following demographic information:

- gender
- hoarding severity level
- age by gender
- dwelling type
- education level
- primary income source
- estimated annual income
- degree of isolation
- other services that had provided intervention
- diagnosed comorbid factors

* Participant information used in this informal random snapshot was safeguarded by assigning a data number separate and apart from the physical file at the time the data was collected from the file and entered on the Tool worksheet. The assigned number is not registered on the file itself, so there is no capability for anyone to match the number with the file. For example, there is no way to cross reference Participant 001 with a particular case file. We also chose random samples so that no clients felt exposed--no information relates directly to their file. They may not be a subject of the study, and therefore anyone who is aware of a present or former client of Birchall Consulting cannot conclude that the demographic information collected applies to themselves or the person they know. A copy of the "Hoarding Demographic Measurement Tools" we used for the review is available in the online supplemental materials.

Gender

Table A.1 indicates that women are 2.41 times more likely to request or accept service than men. This ratio does not indicate the prevalence of women who hoard compared to men. It does represent the likelihood of women versus men to seek help. This finding is consistent with the Johns Hopkins Medicine OCD Collaborative Genetics Study (Samuels et al. 2007) and another epidemiological study, which found a significantly greater prevalence of compulsive hoarding problems in men (4.1 percent) than in women (2.1 percent), but these findings are in sharp contrast with clinically ascertained hoarding samples, which are almost invariably predominantly female. Researchers have concluded that perhaps women are more likely than men to seek help about their hoarding problems, which aligns with our data.

Table A.1

Seeking Help by Gender

Gender	People seeking help	Percentage (%)	Ratio
Male	61	28.5	0.41
Female	147	68.7	2.41
Unknown	6	0.03	0.03

Randy O. Frost, Gail Steketee, and David F. Tolin, in “Comorbidity in Hoarding Disorder,” in the *Depression and Anxiety* journal, state that the prevalence of those who self-identify as hoarding was 78 percent female. By inference, 22 percent are male.

Our findings included those who self-identify as hoarding as well as those who contacted me because someone is concerned about their acquiring behavior. Of this cohort, 68.7 percent were female and 28.5 percent were male. Those who preferred not to identify their gender equaled 0.03 percent.

Hoarding Level

Table A.2 shows that it is 25 percent more likely that a hoarding situation will be at a Level 3 when someone seeks help. If one does not intervene at Level 3, the next most likely point of contact is at a Level 5 (22 percent), and at this point the situation will be a crisis.

Table A.2

Hoarding Level of People Seeking Help

Hoarding level	People seeking help	Percentage (%)*
Level 0	6	3
Level 1	1	<1
Level 2	23	11
Level 3	54	25
Level 4	41	19
Level 5	47	22
Unknown†	42	20

*Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

†Note that 20 percent of requests were by remote methods of contact (phone, email). Even though in all cases, the existing accumulation level was estimated through questions about actual conditions evident to the caller, I was not able to visually confirm the callers' observations.

Age

Table A.3 shows that most women and men reach out, request, and accept service in their forties, fifties, or sixties. It is interesting that people who do not reach out for help and get it in their early forties (40-44) apparently go as long as 10 years before the situation's urgency makes assistance a priority (55-59). The urgency then appears to accelerate for those in the 59-65 age category. Only 6 years later, the next increase in requests for services occurs (65-69).

Anecdotally, when requests for assistance are made in the 65-69 age range, they are usually severe situations of Risk Level 4 or 5.

Table A.3

Age by Gender and Gender by Decade

Age	People seeking help (includes unknown gender cases)	Percentage (%)*	Women	By decade*	Men	By decade*
Under 20	1	0.5	0	--	1	1 (0.5%)
20-24	3	1.4	3	6 (2.8%)	0	1 (0.5%)
25-29	4	1.9	3		1	
30-34	6	2.8	4	12 (5.6%)	1	4 (1.9%)

Age	People seeking help (includes unknown gender cases)	Percentage (%)*	Women	By decade*	Men	By decade*
35-39	14	6.5	8		3	
40-44	36	16.8	27	34 (15.9%)	8	16 (7.5%)
45-49	16	7.5	7		8	
50-54	22	10.3	17	36 (16.8%)	5	12 (5.6%)
55-59	26	12.2	19		7	
60-64	20	9.4	14	38 (17.8%)	6	15 (7.0%)
65-69	33	15.4	24		9	
70-74	19	8.9	14	17 (7.9%)	5	7 (3.3%)
75-79	5	2.3	3		2	
80-84	5	2.3	3	4 (1.9%)	2	4 (1.9%)
85-89	3	1.4	1		2	
90-94	1	0.5	0	--	1	1 (0.5%)
95-99	0	--	0	--	0	
100+	0	--	0	--	0	--

*Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

These results are consistent with the findings expressed by Mark Odom in his “Hoarding Interventions” workshop (2011). His slide “Onset of Hoarding Disorder” details that compulsive acquiring onset is in later adolescence. The onset of clinically significant hoarding is in the thirties age range. The average age range when seeking treatment is in the fifties.

Dwelling Type

At the time clients reached out for help, 30 percent of them lived in three-bedroom detached homes (table A.4). This far exceeds the percentages for the other dwelling types. This does not necessarily mean that larger families requiring a three-bedroom house were most likely to seek help. These results may be a function of the geographic area, as part of my practice is in a lower density urban area with moderate housing costs.

Table A.4

Dwelling Types

Dwelling	People seeking help	Percentage (%)*
Single room or rooms	5	2.3
One-bedroom apt/condo/townhome	28	13.1
Two-bedroom apt/condo/townhome	30	14.0

Three-bedroom apt/condo/townhome	16	7.5
Four-bedroom apt/condo/townhome	2	0.9
One-bedroom detached house	2	0.9
Two-bedroom detached house	14	6.5
Three-bedroom detached house	64	30.0
Four-bedroom (or more) detached house	34	15.9
Other (trailer, house burned, multiple houses)	6	2.8
Unknown	13	6.1

*Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Education

Table A.5 supports the point that hoarding does not respect income or education level. It is interesting to note that 35.5 percent of women had a high school education, while 34.2 percent had an undergraduate degree. Among men seeking help with hoarding, 36.5 percent had graduated from high school, and 26.9 percent had completed an undergraduate degree.

Table A.5**Education by Gender**

Education level	People	Percentage (%)†	Women	Men
	seeking help	(%)†		
	(includes			
	unknown			
	gender)*			
Grade school	11	5.1	8	3
High school	78	36.5	53 (36.1%)	23 (37/7%)
Apprenticeship	0	0	0	0
College	19	8.9	13	6
Professional designation	17	7.9	11	6
Undergraduate degree	69	32.2	51 (34.2%)	17 (26.9%)
Master's degree	17	7.9	10	7
Doctorate	3	1.4	2	1
Other or unknown	2	0.9	1	0

*Some individuals are listed in more than one category, for example, undergraduate and professional.

†Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Main Income Sources

In table A.6, the results for pension income are broadly applicable and consistent with the age range of the highest requests for services in my practice.[†] The labor force in my geographical area is primarily public sector; therefore, it is not surprising to find that 24.8 percent were public sector employees.

Table A.6

Main Income Sources

Income source	People seeking help	Percentage (%)*
Public sector	65	24.8
Private sector	30	11.5
Self-Employed	20	7.6
Paid disability leave from employer	28	10.7
Investments	18	6.9
Provincial or municipal support	14	5.3
Pension	54	20.6
Other (e.g., dependent on spouse or parents)	29	11.0
Blank or unknown	4	1.5

*Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

[†] Some individuals have more than one main source of income, for example, pension and investments.

Estimated Annual Income

While there is a slight increase in requests for service from individuals in the CDN\$30,000 to \$50,000 income bracket, there are no remarkable differences up to the \$100,000 level (table A.7). This supports the observation that hoarding does not respect income.

Table A.7

Annual Income

Annual income (CDN\$)	People seeking help	Percentage (%)*
Under \$10,000	8	3.7
\$10,000<N>\$19,999	19	8.9
\$20,000<N>\$29,999	23	10.8
\$30,000<N>\$39,999	33	15.4
\$40,000<N>\$49,999	33	15.4
\$50,000<N>\$59,999	14	6.5
\$60,000<N>\$69,999	14	6.5
\$70,000<N>\$79,999	22	10.3
\$80,000<N>\$89,999	8	3.7
\$90,000<N>\$99,999	10	4.7
\$100,000<N>\$109,999	10	4.7
\$110,000<N>\$119,999	3	1.4
\$120,000<N>\$129,999	2	0.9
\$130,000<N>\$139,999	1	0.5
\$140,000<N>\$149,999	0	0

\$150,000<N>\$159,999	1	0.5
\$160,000<N>\$169,999	0	0
\$170,000<N>\$179,999	0	0
\$180,000<N>\$189,999	0	0
\$190,000<N>\$199,999	0	0
\$200,000+	7	3.3
Unknown	6	2.8

*Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Estimated Total Assets

Table A.8 indicates that regardless of the income levels in the previous table, these same people had minimal assets, indicating equally minimal disposable income. The question remaining is, Did the funds that normally would have represented their disposable income and savings go toward their acquisition behaviors, resulting in their hoarded environment?

Table A.8

Total Assets

Assets (CDN\$)	People seeking help	Percentage (%)*
\$0<N>\$9,999	53	24.8
Unknown	28	13.1
\$10,000<N>\$99,999	7	3.3
\$100,000<N>\$199,999	24	11.2
\$200,000<N>\$299,999	25	11.7

\$300,000<N>\$399,999	19	8.9
\$400,000<N>\$499,999	11	5.1
\$500,000<N>\$599,999	12	5.6
\$600,000<N>\$699,999	4	1.9
\$700,000<N>\$799,999	3	1.4
\$800,000<N>\$899,999	8	3.7
\$900,000<N>\$999,999	0	0
\$1,000,000+	20	9.4

*Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Type of Debt

Table A.9 illustrates that the debt held by most of this sample group was *bad debt*, meaning debt that does not increase net worth or have future value, or debt that the person doesn't have the cash to pay off (per this table, everything other than mortgage debt).

Table A.9

Type of Debt among People Seeking Help

Type of debt	People seeking help	Percentage (%)*
Mortgage	94	44
Credit cards	143	67
Personal line of credit	48	22
Income tax arrears	78	36

Other (e.g., property tax arrears, car rental charges, traffic tickets, legal fees, car loans, fines, online charges, monthly expenses not covered by income)	17	8
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*Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Number of Daily or Weekly Contacts

Table A.10 indicates that at least 37 percent of those seeking help with hoarding live with someone (in a relationship). Some may be unmarried but have a child or have family or friends who visit at least weekly. We cannot determine if these are vibrant relationships, but at least 37 percent of clients have regular contact with others (such as family, friends, clubs and organizations, volunteering, other forms of social life).

Table A.10

Daily or Weekly Contacts with Other People

Daily or weekly contacts	People seeking help	Percentage (%)*
0	15	7
Unknown	13	6
1-2	79	37
3-5	62	29
6+	45	21

*Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Despite the above indicators of intact relationships, many concerned calls to Birchall Consulting come from family members, who report being estranged but remaining concerned.

Interventions

In table A.11, the highest percentage of interveners are family members, self-referrals, and professionals. *Note:* A client can have more than one intervention. If more than one intervener is involved, multiple interveners were likely required, probably indicating that the situation was more severe.

Table A.11

Interventions

Intervention type	People seeking help
Police	26
Fire	28
Child protection	19
Adult protection	0
Animal protection	5
Housing/landlord	26
Family	81
Friend	17
Self-referral	51

Professionals: social workers, psychologists, senior support, arthritis group, veteran's organization	59
Unspecified	11

Diagnosed Disorders

Table A.12 captures comorbid factors significant enough to disrupt treatment or intervention.

The most common comorbid factors of this cohort group were, in descending order, generalized anxiety disorder, depression, biological factors, personality disorder, OCD, social isolation, disinhibited social engagement disorder, aging with mobility issues, substance use disorder, acute stress disorder, PTSD, dementia, OCPD, eating disorder<N>other, adjustment stress disorder, reactive attachment disorder, avoidant-restrictive eating disorder, ADD, social isolation, borderline personality disorder, compulsive personality and other compulsive disorders, bulimia, ADHD, autism, agoraphobia, anorexia nervosa, Asperger syndrome, acquired brain injury, bipolar 1 and bipolar 2 disorders.

Table A.12

Diagnosed Disorders among People Seeking Help with Hoarding

Disorder (as categorized in the <i>DSM-5</i>)	People seeking help	Percentage of study cohort (%)
Depressive disorders	112	52.33
• Depression	112	52.33
• Anxiety disorders	168	78.50

Disorder (as categorized in the <i>DSM-5</i>)	People seeking help	Percentage of study cohort (%)
• Hoarding	-	100.00*
• OCD	41	19.15
• Agoraphobia	1	0.46
• Generalized anxiety disorder	126	58.87
Personality disorders	65	30.37
• Personality disorder	58	27.10
• Borderline personality disorder	2	0.93
• OCPD	5	2.33
Substance-related and addictive disorders	19	8.87
• Substance use disorder	17	7.94
• Compulsive personality and compulsive disorders	2	0.93
Eating disorders	12	5.60
• Anorexia nervosa	1	0.46
• Bulimia	2	0.93
• Avoidant-restrictive intake	4	1.86

Disorder (as categorized in the <i>DSM-5</i>)	People seeking help	Percentage of study cohort (%)
• Other	5	2.33
Autism spectrum disorders	3	1.40
• Autism	2	0.93
• Asperger syndrome	1	0.46
Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder	6	2.80
• Attention deficit disorder (ADD)	4	1.86
• Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	2	0.93
Neurocognitive disorders	6	2.80
• Dementia	5	2.33
• Acquired brain injury	1	0.46
Bipolar disorder	2	0.93
• Bipolar 1 disorder	1	0.46
• Bipolar 2 disorder	1	0.46
Trauma and stressor-related disorders	53	24.76
• Reactive attachment disorder	4	1.86

Disorder (as categorized in the <i>DSM-5</i>)	People seeking help	Percentage of study cohort (%)
• Disinhibited social engagement disorder	30	14.01
• PTSD	5	2.33
• Acute stress disorder	10	4.67
• Adjustment stress disorder	4	1.86
Other notable characteristics		
• Social isolation	35	16.35
• Aging with mobility issues	26	12.14
• Biological factors**	78	36.44

Note: Clients in this random sample may have multiple comorbid factors.

*Every member of the study cohort exhibited hoarding behavior and asked for service for hoarding behavior.

**History of generational hoarding behavior.

In Mark Odom’s workshop slide “Hoarding and Related Conditions” (2011), he indicates that 57 percent of those who hoard meet the criteria for major depressive disorder, and 29 percent experienced social phobia.

Depression presented in 52.33 percent of our sample. Social isolation presented in 16.35 percent. The sample measured social isolation rather than social phobia.

From the same research, Odom cites that 28 percent of those who hoard meet the criteria for generalized anxiety disorder.

In our random sample, 58.87 percent meet the criteria for generalized anxiety disorder. We made the decision to include all nonspecific demonstrated anxiety under the umbrella of generalized anxiety disorder. This might explain the difference between Odom's findings and ours.